DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 319 143 EA 021 863

TITLE National Goals for Education.
INSTITUTION Executive Office of the President, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Feb 90
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Assessment; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Objectives; Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; *Excellence in Education; *Futures (of Society); Government Publications; Higher Education; Literacy Education; Preschool Education; Presidents of the United States; School Restructuring

ABSTRACT

At the education "summit" held in 1989 in Charlottesville, Virginia, the President and the Governors called for the establishment of clear national performance goals designed to make the United States internationally competitive. Six national education goals, to be reached by the year 2000, were identified as the first step in carrying out that commitment. The goals are as follows: (1) All children in America will start school ready to learn; (2) the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent; (3) American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; they will also have learned to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy; (4) U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement; (5) every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and (6) every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning. Several objectives are given under each goal, and the document concludes with brief guidelines for the changing and restructuring of the U.S. educational system that will be necessary to achieve these goals. (MLF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED319143

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release — February 26, 1990

NATIONAL GOALS FOR EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

At the historic education summit in Charlottesville five months ago, the President and the Governors declared that "the time has come, for the first time in U.S. history, to establish clear national performance goals, goals that will make us internationally competitive." The six national education goals contained here are the first step in carrying out that commitment.

America's educational performance must be second to none in the 21st century. Education is central to our quality of life. It is at the heart of our economic strength and security, our creativity in the arts and letters, our invention in the sciences, and the perpetuation of our cultural values. Education is the key to America's international competitiveness.

Today, a new standard for an educated citizenry is required, one suitable for the next century. Our people must be as knowledgeable, as well-trained, as competent, and as inventive as those in any other nation. All of our people, not just a few, must be able to think for a living, adapt to changing environments, and to understand the world around them. They must understand and accept the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship. They must continually learn and develop new skills throughout their lives.

America can meet this challenge if our society is dedicated to a renaissance in education. We must become a nation that values education and learning. We must recognize that every child can learn, regardless of background or disability. We must recognize that education is a lifelong pursuit, not just an endeavor for our children.

Sweeping, fundamental changes in our education system must be made. Educators must be given greater flexibility to devise challenging and inspiring strategies to serve the needs of a diverse body of students. This is especially important for students who are at risk of academic failure -- for the failure of these students will become the failure of our nation. Achieving these changes depends in large part on the commitment of professional educators. Their daily work must be dedicated to creating a new educational order in which success for all students is the first priority, and they must be held accountable for the results.

This is not the responsibility of educators alone, however. All Americans have an important stake in the success of our education system, and every part of our society must be involved in meeting that challenge. Parents must be more interested and involved in their children's education, and students must accept the challenge of higher expectations for achievement and greater responsibility for their future. In addition, communities, business and civic groups,

EA 021 863

and state, local, and federal government each has a vital role to play throughout this decade to ensure our success.

The first step is to establish ambitious national education goals -- performance goals that must be achieved if the United States is to remain competitive in the world marketplace and our citizens are to reach their fullest potential. These goals are about excellence. Meeting them will require that the performance of our highest achievers be boosted to levels that equal or exceed the performance of the best students anywhere. The performance of our lowest achievers must be substantially increased far beyond their current performance. What our best students can achieve now, our average students must be able to achieve by the turn of the century. We must work to ensure that a significant number of students from all races, ethnic groups, and income levels are among our top performers.

If the United States is to maintain a strong and responsible democracy and a prosperous and growing economy into the next century, all of our citizens must be involved in achieving these goals. Every citizen will benefit as a result. When challenged, the American people have always shown their determination to succeed. The challenge before us calls on each American to help ensure our nation's future.

NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS

Readiness for School

GOAL 1: By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.

Objectives:

- All disadvantaged and disabled children will have access to high quality and developmentally appropriate preschool programs that help prepare children for school.
- Every parent in America will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day helping his or her preschool child learn; parents will have access to the training and support they need.
- Children will receive the nutrition and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and the number of low birthweight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems.

High School Completion

GOAL 2: By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.

Objectives:

- The nation must dramatically reduce its dropout rate and seventy-five percent of those students who do drop out will successfully complete a high school degree or its equivalent.
- The gap in high school graduation rates between American students from minority backgrounds and their non-minority counterparts will be eliminated.

Student Achievement and Citizenship

GOAL 3: By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

Objectives:

- The academic performance of elementary and secondary students will increase significantly in every quartile, and the distribution of minority students in each level will more closely reflect the student population as a whole.
- The percentage of students who demonstrate the ability to reason, solve problems, apply knowledge, and write and communicate effectively will increase substantially.
- All students will be involved in activities that promote and demonstrate good citizenship, community service, and personal responsibility.
- The percentage of students who are competent in more than one language will substantially increase.
- All students will be knowledgeable about the diverse cultural heritage of this nation and about the world community.

Science and Mathematics

GOAL 4: By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

Objectives:

- Math and science education will be strengthened throughout the system, especially in the early grades.
- The number of teachers with a substantive background in mathematics and science will increase by 50 percent.
- The number of U.S. undergraduate and graduate students, especially women and minorities, who complete degrees in mathematics, science, and engineering will increase significantly.

Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

GOAL 5: By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Objectives:

- Every major American business will be involved in strengthening the connection between education and work.

- All workers will have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills, from basic to highly technical, needed to adapt to emerging new technologies, work methods, and markets through public and private educational, vocational, technical, workplace, or other programs.

- The number of quality programs, including those at libraries, that are designed to serve more effectively the needs of the growing number of part-time and mid-career students will increase substantially.

- The proportion of those qualified students, especially minorities, who enter college; who complete at least two years; and who complete their degree programs will increase substantially.

- The proportion of college graduates who demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems will increase substantially.

Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools

GOAL 6: By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Objectives:

- Every school will implement a firm and fair policy on use, possession, and distribution of drugs and alcohol.

- Parents, businesses, and community organizations will work together to ensure that schools are a safe haven for all children.

- Every school district will develop a comprehensive K-12 drug and alcohol prevention education program. Drug and alcohol curriculum should be taught as an integral part of health education. In addition, community-based teams should be organized to provide students and teachers with needed support.

NECESSARY CHANGES AND RESTRUCTURING

These goals are ambitious, yet they can and must be achieved. However, they cannot be achieved by our education system as it is presently constituted. Substantial, even radical changes will have to be made.

Without a strong commitment and concerted effort on the part of every sector and every citizen to improve dramatically the performance of the nation's education system and each and every student, these goals will remain nothing more than a distant, unattainable vision. For their part, Governors will work within their own states to develop strategies for restructuring their education systems in order to achieve the goals. Because states differ from one another, each state will approach this in a different manner. The President and the Governors will work to support these state efforts, and to recommend steps that the federal government, business, and community groups should take to help achieve these national goals. The nature of many of these steps is already clear.

The Preschool Years

American homes must be places of learning. Parents should play an active role in their children's early learning, particularly by reading to them on a daily basis. Parents should have access to the support and training required to fulfill this role, especially in poor, under-educated families.

In preparing young people to start school, both the federal and state governments have important roles to play, especially with regard to health, nutrition, and early childhood development. Congress and the administration have increased maternal and child health coverage for all families with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty line. Many states go beyond this level of coverage, and more are moving in this direction. In addition, states continue to develop more effective delivery systems for prenatal and postnatal care. However, we still need more prevention, testing, and screening, and early identification and treatment of learning disorders and disabilities.

The federal government should work with the states to develop and fully fund early intervention strategies for children. All eligible children should have access to Head Start, Chapter 1, or some other successful preschool program with strong parental involvement. Our first priority must be to provide at least one year of preschool for all disadvantaged children.

The School Years

As steps are taken to better prepare children for schools, we must also better prepare schools for children.

This is especially important for young children. Schools must be able to educate effectively all children when they arrive at the schoolhouse door, regardless of variations in students' interest, capacities, or learning styles.

Next, our public education system must be fundamentally restructured in order to ensure that all students can meet higher standards. This means reorienting schools so they focus on results, not on procedures; giving each school's principal and teachers the discretion to make more decisions and the flexibility to use federal, state, and local resources in more productive, innovative ways that improve learning; providing a way for gifted professionals who want to teach to do so through alternative certification avenues, and giving parents more responsibility for their children's education through magnet schools, public school choice, and other strategies. Most important, restructuring requires creating powerful incentives for performance and improvement, and real consequences for persistent failure. It is only by maintaining this balance of flexibility and accountability that we can truly improve our schools.

The federal government must sustain its vital role of promoting educational equity by ensuring access to quality educational programs for all students regardless of race, national origin, sex, or handicapping condition. Federal funds should target those students most in need of assistance due to economic disadvantage or risk of academic failure.

Finally, efforts to restructure education must work toward guaranteeing that all students are engaged in rigorous programs of instruction designed to ensure that every child, regardless of background or disability, acquires the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a changing economy. In recent years, there has been an increased commitment to mathematics and science improvement programs. The federal government should continue to enhance financial assistance to state and local governments for effective programs in these areas. Likewise, there has been a greater federal emphasis on programs that target youth at risk of school failure and dropping out. The federal government should continue to enhance funding and seek strategies to help states in their efforts to seek solutions to these problems.

Improving elementary and secondary student achievement will not require a national curriculum, but it will require that the nation invest in developing the skills and knowledge of our educators and equipping our schools with up-to-date technology. The quality of teachers and teaching is essential to meeting our goals. We must have well-prepared teachers and we must increase the number of qualified teachers in critical shortage areas, including rural and urban schools, specialized fields such as foreign languages, mathematics and science, and from minority groups. Policies must attract and keep able teachers who reflect the cultural diversity of our nation. Policies that shape how our educators are prepared, certified, rewarded, developed and supported on the job must be consistent with efforts to restructure the education system and ensure that every school is capable of teaching all of our children to think and reason. Teachers and other school leaders must not only be outstanding, the schools in which they work must also be restructured to utilize both professional talent and technology to improve student learning and teacher- and system-productivity.

The After-School Years

Comprehensive, well-integrated lifelong learning opportunities must be created for a world in which three of four new jobs will require more than a high school education; workers with only high school diplomas may face the prospect of declining incomes; and most workers will

change their jobs ten or eleven times over their lifetime.

In most states, the present system for delivering adult literacy services is fractured and inadequate. Because the United States has far higher rates of adult functional illiteracy than other advanced countries, a first step is to establish in each state a public-private partnership to create a functionally literate workforce.

In some other countries, government policies and programs are carefully coordinated with private sector activities to create effective apprenticeship and job training activities. By contrast, the United States has a multilayered system of vocational and technical schools, community colleges, and specific training programs funded from multiple sources and subject to little coordination. These institutions need to be restructured so they fit together more sensibly and effectively to give all adults access to flexible and comprehensive programs that meet their needs. Every major business must work to provide appropriate training and educational opportunities to prepare employees for the twenty-first century.

Finally, a larger share of our population, especially those from working class, poor, and minority backgrounds, must be helped to attend and remain in college. The cost of a college education, as a percentage of median family income, has approximately tripled in a generation. That means more loans, scholarships, and work-study opportunities are needed. The federal government's role in ensuring access for qualified students is critical. At the same time, the higher education system must use existing resources far more productively than it does at present, and must be held more accountable for what students do or do not learn. The federal government will continue to examine ways to reduce students' increasing debt burden and to address the proper balance between grant and loan programs.

ASSESSMENT

National education goals will be meaningless unless progress toward meeting them is measured accurately and adequately, and reported to the American people. Doing a good job of assessment and reporting requires the resolution of three issues.

First, what students need to know must be defined. In some cases, there is a solid foundation on which to build. For example, the National Council on Teachers of Mathematics and the Mathematical Sciences Education Board have done important work in defining what all students must know and be able to do in order to be mathematically competent. A major effort for science has been initiated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. These efforts must be expanded and extended to other subject areas.

Second, when it is clear what students need to know, it must be determined whether they know it. There have been a number of important efforts to improve our ability to measure student learning at the state and national levels. This year for the first time, the National Assessment for Education Progress (NAEP) will collect data on student performance on a state-by-state basis for thirty-seven states. Work is underway to develop a national assessment of adult literacy. These and other efforts must be supported and strengthened.

The Governors urge the National Assessment Governing Board to begin work to set national performance goals in the subject areas in which NAEP will be administered. This does not mean establishing standards for individual competence; rather, it requires determining how to set targets for increases in the percentage of students performing at the higher levels of the NAEP scales.

Third, measurements must be accurate, comparable, appropriate, and constructive. Placement decisions for young children should not be made on the basis of standardized tests. Achievement tests must not simply measure minimum competencies, but also higher levels of reading, writing, speaking, reasoning, and problem-solving skills. And in comparing America's achievement with that of other countries, it is essential that international comparisons are reliable. In addition, appropriate, nationally-directed research, demonstration, data collection, and innovation should be maintained and recognized as a set of core responsibilities of the federal government in education. That role needs to be strengthened in cooperation with the states.

The President and the Governors agree that while we do not need a new data-gathering agency, we do need a bipartisan group to oversee the process of determining and developing appropriate measurements and reporting on the progress toward meeting the goals. This process should stay in existence until at least the year 2000 so that we assure ten full years of effort toward meeting the goals.

A Challenge

These national education goals are not the President's goals or the Governors' goals; they are the nation's goals.

These education goals are the beginning, not the end, of the process. Governors are committed to working within their own states to review state education goals and performance levels in light of these national goals. States are encouraged to adjust state goals according to this review, and to expand upon national goals where appropriate. The President and the Governors challenge every family, school, school district, and community to adopt these national goals as their own, and establish other goals that reflect the particular circumstances and challenges they face as America approaches the twenty-first century.

###